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Mahon Expects Airborne Alert

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (AP)—Forecasting a period of great peril for the nation beginning 1961, a key Democratic lawmaker indicated that Congress will multiply funds to provide for an airborne alert by U.S. bomber forces.

The chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Rep. George H. Mahon of Texas, said he thinks Congress will authorize three of four times the \$85,000,000 asked by President Eisenhower to prepare for an airborne alert.

Such an alert would keep a substantial portion of U.S. heavy bombers in the air at all times, fully armed with nuclear weapons, safe from any sneak attack on ground bases and in position to strike at enemy targets immediately after any atomic attack on this country.

Agrees on Strength

Appearing on a television-radio program (CBS-Face the Nation), Mahon agreed with Administration spokesmen that "this nation is stronger than any nation in the world today" in over-all striking ability. But, he said, the country is heading into a two or three-year period, starting in 1961, when the Soviet Union's superiority in inter-continental ballistic missiles will present "the most frighteningly important situation that we have even been in in our lives."

Mahon said "any town in this country could be hit in the next 30 minutes" by a Russian ICBM, and we have no effective way of fending off such blows.

'No One Knows'

He expressed doubt that any such attack would come soon but foresaw a Russian missile superiority of about 3-to-1 in the critical period ahead and "no one in the Pentagon, in Central Intelligence or in or out of Congress knows" what Soviet intentions will produce in that period.

The Texan saw no need for an immediate airborne alert but said "we may have to have it six months or a year from now" to insure against having our major retaliatory power wiped out by a sneak assault.